



Our Stories and How They Are Part of God's Plan

My story relates to our three legacy parishes and to St. Elizabeth of the Trinity. They all fit into God's plan for me.

I was baptized at St. Thecla, where my parents were married, and where grandparents, uncle, aunt, and cousins belonged. However, there were parish boundaries back then, and so I attended St. Tarcissus from kindergarten through eighth grade. I remain a parishioner of what is now St. Elizabeth of the Trinity to this day.

After Catholic high school and college, I entered the retail industry. I worked hard and rose from stockboy to store manager for a Chicago retailer that went bankrupt. After another six years in retail management, that company also went bankrupt.

After that, I couldn't find another job in retail. It was then that I was inspired to enroll in Loyola University where I received a master's degree in Pastoral Studies. I now see that God had a different plan for me. I now know that God has created all of us, not only to love and serve Him, but also to fulfill a mission that He has given to us alone – here and now.

After graduation, I was hired as the St. Tarcissus Director of Religious Education in November of 1994. After five years I took on the additional duties of Business Manager. I held both positions for several years. Eventually, due to financial constraints, my hours were cut sharply. At the time my father was very ill and needed more care, which I was able to provide. After his death, I had more free time and was soon hired as the St. Cornelius Business Manager. I worked there two days a week from June 2016 until it closed in August 2020 while I worked two other days at St. Tarcissus.

Since the birth of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity in July of 2020 I have worked full time with the title of Pastoral Minister.

In recent years, I've learned leadership skills through the "Rescue Project" and have spiritually grown through "That Man Is You." I am very excited to be leading the "This Is Our Faith" series which is studying the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

I pray daily that God will show me what I should be doing – and that I will do it. And when I feel overwhelmed, tired or think I can't do something – I thank God, because He is answering my prayers. He is giving me the opportunity to serve His people.

I hope you will reflect on why God placed you here and now. Pray about what you can do to fulfill your God-given mission. As I get older, I am still learning new ways to grow in my faith. I pray that Christ will continue to motivate me, as I look to see God in my everyday tasks.

For personal inspiration, I encourage you to pray before the Blessed Sacrament during Adoration. It is truly a privileged time! You can speak to Him, and He will speak to you.

Jim Madura